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INFO RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 3107  
RUEHKV/AMEMBASSY KIEV 2876  
RUEHVL/AMEMBASSY VILNIUS 3337  
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 3006  
RUEHRA/AMEMBASSY RIGA 1388  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 0634  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MINSK 001026

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/30/15  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [BO](#)  
SUBJECT: MFA RESPONDS TO DIP NOTE ON DETAINED U.S. DIPLOMAT

Classified by Charge Constance Phlipot for Reasons 1.4  
(B,D)

Ref: Minsk 1006

11. (U) On August 31 Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials called in CDA to discuss the results of the MFA's investigation into the August 23 detention of Poloff and LES political assistant in Gomel (reftel). Pavel Pustovoi and Alexander Strigelsky of the MFA Americas Desk reported police in Gomel entered a private apartment to conduct a routine passport check. Pustovoi noted the approximately ten Belarusian nationals in the apartment refused to show their passports to the police. When Poloff presented his diplomatic card, the police officers determined the document to be severely damaged and therefore called their regional superiors to verify the credentials of Poloff. According to the MFA investigation, once the regional chief of citizenship and migration issues verified Poloff's credentials, the two Emboffs were immediately allowed to leave the apartment. The MFA concluded the local and regional authorities performed their duties within the confines of domestic and international law. Pustovoi added the entire incident could have been avoided if Poloff carried a legible dipcard.

12. (U) CDA thanked Pustovoi for the response to the Embassy's diplomatic note on the incident, but she stressed the USG remained concerned about police treatment of an accredited diplomat. The Gomel police officers unnecessarily created an atmosphere of fear while carrying out their duties. Moreover, the police refused to allow Emboffs to leave the apartment for 40 minutes. She noted the blocking of the road that led to the original location of Poloff's meeting with local NGOs and the presence of state TV crews at the new meeting location clearly indicated the premeditated nature of the detention of the Emboffs. Responding to Pustovoi's suggestion that the Poloff carry a legible dipcard, CDA said the lamination of the dip cards is of poor quality and therefore all dipcards run the risk of becoming exposed and damaged.

13. (C) Comment: The explanation provided by the MFA is groundless at best. The Gomel police were not merely conducting a routine check of passports in the apartment. It was part of an orchestrated attempt by the GOB to harass Embassy officials. It is noteworthy that when CDA raised our concern with the MFA officials, they expressed no sympathy and simply advised us to keep our dipcards in good

condition.

PHLIPOT